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id: 24456
date: 12/22/2004 5:24
refid: 04ANKARA7106
origin: Embassy Ankara
classification: SECRET//NOFORN
destination:
header:
This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 007106

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2029

TAGS: PREL PINR PINS MOPS MARR TU IZ

SUBJECT: A RARE GLIMPSE INTO TURKISH MILITARY INTEL: IRAQ,
PKK CONCERNS, PARANOIA, ANTI-NATO CAMPAIGN

(U) Classified by CDA Robert Deutsch; reasons: E.O. 12958 1.4
(a,b,c,d).

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: Long-term Embassy contact with deep experience in intel and national security analysis has relayed to us from his sources the belief that (1) PKK and Sunni radicals collaborated in Dec. 17 murder of five Turkish security guards in Mosul; (2) PKK is readying a serious terrorism campaign in Turkish cities; (3) Turkish Jandarma intel is besieged by paranoid orders from Ankara to uncover "Armenian separatists" and an "Israeli land grab" in the southeast; and (4) a serious disinformation and psyops campaign against NATO is being waged on more junior Turkish officers. Our contact has proven accurate in the past but we caution that we have no corroborating evidence for much of the information in this cable -- especially relating to the Mosul attack. End summary.

¶2. (S/NF) Just returned from two trips to Turkey's southeast, where he is involved in a major anti-smuggling investigation at the behest of Turkey's Energy Minister, a pre-eminent Turkish national security analyst (XXXXXXXXXX -- strictly protect) briefed us Dec. 20-21 on several aspects of current Turkish security questions, and, in particular, Jandarma intel (JITEM) ops and preoccupations. He based his report to us on meetings with approximately 40 JITEM officers -- lieutenants, captains, and majors, some of whom were our contact's students -- involved in field investigations and ops from Mersin to Mardin.

Murder of Five Turkish Police Security Guards Transiting Mosul

¶3. (S/NF) Dec. 21 our main contact and another contact of ours from TNP bureau of intelligence together discussed with us what they have heard regarding the Dec. 17 murder of the Turkish security guards in transit through Mosul on their way to the Turkish embassy in Baghdad. Our main contact said he had had two phone conversations with a former member of the PKK leadership whom he has known for a long time and who is now being run as a Jandarma agent in northern Iraq. This agent told our contact that all signs (not further explained) point to collaboration in the attack between the PKK and Sunni tribal Arab radicals and that two of the drivers in the convoy disappeared unharmed after the attack (sic); tracking them down would be key to establishing the attackers' identity, our main contact added. Our TNP contact agreed that this may be a case of PKK-Sunni radical collaboration but TNP is also checking to see whether there is any KDP connection.

¶4. (S/NF) Our main contact added that the Turkish military is aware of how stretched Task Force Olympia (TFO) is but, along with TNP, would like to be invited to participate in a joint investigation with the Americans. He also notes that proof Sunni Arabs were behind the murder would be as compelling a weapon as exists to help quash the rampant anti-American disinformation campaign in Turkey about our operations in Iraq. He and the TNP contact agreed that, in any event, the murder marks a watershed in how Turkey will deal with any such future attacks: the presence of all high GOT and State officials at the Dec. 20 memorial service in Ankara reminded our interlocutors of similar attendance at the funeral of 31 Jandarma soldiers killed in a 1993 PKK ambush and the subsequent uncompromising Turkish response. Both expected that, once the Turkish authorities determine who was responsible (not hard to do, they asserted), Turkey will take revenge through covert action.

PKK

¶5. (S/NF) Running anti-PKK operations flat-out in the southeastern provinces of Urfa, Mardin, and Diyarbakir, JITEM is troubled by the amounts of weapons, especially heavy machine guns and similar, and explosives being smuggled into Turkey from Iraq, our contact reports. JITEM figures it is intercepting only one in three trucks. Some of the arms appear to be flowing to Kurdish feudal landlords (agas) who are arming their followers to give them muscle in land grabs in anticipation of EU harmonization which will bring land registry under tighter control. The mere fact of arming with such weaponry sets these groups against the Turkish State.

¶6. (S/NF) Arms and explosives are also being smuggled into Turkey's cities, which the PKK has now thoroughly penetrated, according to our contact's JITEM sources. (Note: Jandarma has no authority in or responsibility for urban areas, which are the domain of TNP. End note.) According to our source, JITEM has information that PKK militants from western Europe, chosen for their clean-cut, educated manners to blend undetectably into an urban environment, have been trained in urban terrorism -- assassinations and explosions -- in at least one camp in northern Iraq (not further identified) shared with Ansar al-Islam. JITEM expects the PKK to launch extensive terrorist actions in Turkey's cities in the wake of the EU decision to grant Turkey a 2005 accession negotiation start date, he said.

17. (S/NF) Pointing to a regional trend toward PKK-Sunni Arab collaboration, our contact said he has heard for some time that PKK-related Kurds in Syria have allied with hard-core Sunnis in the Syrian military against Bashir Assad. Adana Consul has heard similar rumors in his travels in the southeast.

Paranoia

18. (S/NF) The Turkish State's fear of history is reflected in a steady stream of orders from Ankara to JITEM posts in the field to combat "Armenian separatism." Our contact's JITEM acquaintances told him that for a long time they were mystified by the insistence of the orders, given that there is literally only a handful of Armenians left in the southeast. As they worked in vain to uncover any signs of Armenian separatism, they came to realize that Ankara was basing its suspicions on the meticulous population registry (nufus kutugu) of family lineage which, among other things, shows how many citizens -- especially concentrated in certain regions of the east and southeast -- actually have an Armenian background underneath their forebears' voluntary or forced conversions or adoptions during the period when Armenians were being deported and murdered en masse by the Ottoman authorities and local Muslim bands. The distant and suppressed Armenian connection is so pervasive that JITEM even came across a village imam with Armenian roots, our contact relayed. In our own extensive travels throughout Anatolia, especially east of the Kizilirmak River, we have been repeatedly struck by (a) the common knowledge among ordinary citizens of what happened in 1915, a knowledge which most will readily share; and (b) the number of people with apparent Armenian features.

19. (C) We note that the population registry, a continuation of the Ottoman system akin in some ways to parish baptismal records but more centralized and detailed, is a system whose maintenance even today illustrates the extraordinary attention to, and fear of, "foreign elements" among the citizenry.

110. (S/NF) JITEM has also been burdened by an endless loop of orders to investigate allegations that Israelis are buying up land in the fertile Harran plain south and east of Urfa, our contact reports. After a square-inch by square-inch review, JITEM in Urfa could find no evidence of such a trend. Noticing that Ankara was relying for its orders on material published in the weekly "Aydinlik" by Dogu Perincek, a notorious source of pro-"Eurasian", anti-U.S., anti-NATO, anti-Israeli disinformation -- which many of our Turkish contacts say is provided and financed in great measure by the Russians -- one local JITEM commander, to get Ankara off his back, slyly suggested in his final report that Ankara should consider whether this information had been provided by Syrian intelligence or by the Israelis themselves to make Turkey fear Israel's might.

Anti-NATO Campaign

111. (S/NF) Our contact reports that his JITEM contacts are disturbed by a focused campaign to poison younger officers against NATO. The campaign includes lectures and house visits to Jandarma officers in Urfa, Mardin and elsewhere by people such as Ankara University professor Anil Cecen (pronounced "Chechen"; he is of Chechen descent), a well-known "Eurasia" advocate and NATO opponent. Our contact noted to us that there are anti-NATO cells of instructors at the Military Academies in Istanbul as well.

112. (S/NF) DAO Ankara has also observed and reported an undercurrent of anti-Americanism and open questioning of the alliance by junior and mid-level officers, expressions sanctioned by more senior leadership, e.g., in the Turkish special forces.

Comment

113. (S/NF) As we have experienced ourselves in travelling with him throughout Anatolia, our contact, a 12-year veteran of Turkish military intelligence and former police academy instructor, has maintained a country-wide network of contacts in Turkey's three main intel services, especially JITEM and the national police (TNP). He has proven to be a timely and accurate source for us on Turkish intel, military matters, socio-anthropology and, given his XXXXXXXXXXXX origin and religious training (XXXXXXXXXXXX), on ruling AK Party, the sociology and politics of reliability of his specific reports.

114. (C) Baghdad minimize considered.
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